

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A cartridge for preparing a fluid food product, comprising:

a container comprising a cover configured for rupturing against protruding hollowed-out elements of an extraction cage upon injection of a fluid into the cartridge at at least a rupturing pressure within the cartridge;

a food component contained within the container and configured for producing the food product upon contact with the fluid; and

a barrier mounted to the container adjacent to the food component ~~and being substantially impervious to the food component~~ for retaining the food component within the container;

wherein the container and barrier are configured for puncturing by an injection needle for injecting the fluid into the container to produce the rupturing pressure, the barrier being configured for resealing itself against leakage of the food component from within the container upon withdrawal of the needle therefrom.

2. (Original) The cartridge of claim 1, wherein the food product comprises a beverage.

3. (Original) The cartridge of claim 2, wherein the food component comprises tea, ground coffee, instant coffee, a chocolate based product, or a mixture thereof.

4. (Original) The cartridge of claim 1, wherein the food component comprises a dehydrated edible substance.

5. (Original) The cartridge of claim 1, wherein the barrier is disposed within the container.

6. (Original) The cartridge of claim 1, wherein the container comprises a first container member to which the cover is attached, and the barrier is attached to the first container member.

7. (Original) The cartridge of claim 6, wherein the first container member comprises a concave dish portion.

8. (Original) The cartridge of claim 1, wherein the barrier is sufficiently resilient to allow perforation by the needle but which resiliently reseals itself against leakage of the food component upon withdrawal of the needle.

9. (Original) The cartridge of claim 1, wherein the barrier comprises a valve positioned and configured for opening to receive the needle, and for closing to retain the food component within the cartridge upon withdrawal of the needle.

10. (Original) The cartridge of claim 9, wherein the valve defines a cut-out with a plurality of branches configured for opening around the needle and closing upon withdrawal thereof.

11. (Original) The cartridge of claim 1, wherein the container is impermeable to oxygen and the cover comprises aluminium, plastic, a composite thereof, an aluminium/plastic/paper composite, or multi-layer plastic.

12. (Original) A cartridge for preparing a food product, comprising:
a container comprising a cover configured for rupturing against protruding hollowed-out elements of an extraction cage upon injection of a fluid into the cartridge at at least a rupturing pressure within the cartridge;
a food component contained within the container and configured for producing the food product upon contact with the fluid; and
a barrier mounted to the container adjacent to the food component and being substantially impervious to the food component for retaining the food component within the container;
wherein the container and barrier are configured for puncturing by an injection needle for injecting the fluid into the container to produce the rupturing pressure, wherein the barrier is sufficiently resilient for perforating with the needle and resiliently resealing itself against leakage of the food component.

13. (Original) The cartridge of claim 12, wherein the barrier comprises a layer of elastic fabric.

14. (Original) The cartridge of claim 13, wherein the fabric comprises polyester.

15. (Original) The cartridge of claim 12, wherein the barrier comprises a resilient foam.

16. (Original) The cartridge of claim 15, wherein the foam is a plastic foam.

17. (New) The cartridge of claim 1, wherein the barrier is substantially impervious to the food component.